

REMARKS

Claims 4, 5 and 26-28 now stand in the application, claims 1-3 and 6-25 having been canceled by the Preliminary Amendment filed March 19, 2004, and new claims 26-28 added herein. Reconsideration of the application and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

The present invention resides in a technique for managing the charging of subscriber usage of non-telephone services onboard a vehicle. The invention keeps track of charges for the subscriber's use of services onboard the vehicle and sends to the terrestrial entity the user's number together with charging data that can be included on the user's monthly bill from that entity.

Miller et al teaches a satellite communications network in which a user onboard an aircraft may place and receive calls through a multiple user communication unit (MCU). As described from line 56 of column 12 through line 33 of column 13, Miller provides a terrestrial station responsible for billing charges relating to a particular MCU. There is no discussion in Miller of passing the billing information to a service point of the telecommunication network to which the user subscribes.

Mielke et al similarly describes a system for allowing users to place and receive calls while onboard an aircraft, and Mielke et al teaches the transmission of billing information to a ground switching station 200, network administration center 300 or PSTN 600. But there is no indication in Mielke et al that the switching station 200, administration center 300 or PSTN 600 are part of a telecommunication network to which the onboard user is a subscriber, as opposed to

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a way of simply having the onboard telephone services provider send billing information to its own terrestrial office from which it can be billed to the passenger.

A further feature of the invention neither shown nor suggested in the prior art is that the onboard communications capability is used to track charges for entertainment services and these are billed to the subscriber through the subscriber's telecommunication network. Miller and Mielke et al deal with telephone calls, but neither deals with entertainment services. Weiler et al also does not deal with entertainment services.

Claim 26 has been added to emphasize this aspect of the invention neither shown nor suggested in the prior art. Claims 27-28 have been added to describe in different terms the billing of onboard entertainment services through a terrestrial entity.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited.

An extension of time is respectfully requested, and the required fee is being separately authorized through the Electronic Filing System (EFS) The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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CUSTOMER NUMBER

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